

*Eugene Resident, Don Fisher, Inspired Resolution*

WASHINGTON, DC-- Congressman Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) is pleased to announce that H.Res. 925, a resolution he authored to grant long overdue congressional recognition to pilots that were shot down or landed in enemy territory, passed the House of Representatives this weekend unanimously. The resolution will also direct the Secretaries of the military departments to consider these aviators for appropriate recognition within their branch of the Armed Forces.

“The extraordinary service and sacrifice of these brave men has gone unrecognized for far too long. I am pleased that we are finally able to honor these veterans, many of whom served in WWII, that have never received formal recognition for their ability to avoid capture or escape from captivity. This legislation is also meant to honor the families of these brave aviators, many of which went for months or even years without any knowledge of what had happened to their loved ones,” DeFazio said.

“I am particularly pleased to honor Eugene resident, Don Fisher, who was shot down over German occupied France. His plane was shot down and he was hanging from a tree while a German fighter pilot circled him. He thought that the pilot would shoot at him but instead, he just saluted and flew off. Mr. Fisher managed to free himself from his harness and moved from farm to farm while German troops were looking for him. Eventually, he was introduced to members of the French resistance. Over the next year, he lived with French families and worked with the resistance movement, using a French/English dictionary to communicate. He revealed himself to British troops when they liberated Paris and was finally allowed to contact his family and let them know he was alive. I was lucky enough to have Mr. Fisher tell me this remarkable story himself last year. When I learned that there are thousands of these men, I decided to introduce this legislation,” DeFazio continued.

Thousands of aviators in the Armed Forces, including pilots, navigators, bombardiers, weapons control officers, and other aircraft crew members, have been forced out of the skies and into hostile territory over the last 92 years. Overcoming long odds, many of these aviators have bravely evaded or escaped enemy capture to return to their units and resume their service to the United States. Many of these cases involved living undercover in enemy territory for countless months or even years. While these brave aviators were trying to survive behind enemy lines, their families and friends back home endured unimaginable hardship waiting to learn the status of their loved ones. DeFazio is now working to secure a congressional gold

medal for Mr. Fisher and his fellow downed aviators.